Statement by the United States on the Strengthened Review Process

First Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Statement by Mark W. Goodman
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Mr. Chairman,

I will begin today by addressing potential actions to improve the Treaty’s review process, and in that context, I will conclude by reiterating the importance of rebuilding the culture of consensus based on recognizing and reaffirming how the Treaty serves our shared interests.

Strengthened Review Process

Mr. Chairman,

The United States remains committed to the decisions adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, including the decision on the strengthened review process. As we approach the 25th anniversary of that decision, it is appropriate to review how this process has worked and explore ways to refine and further strengthen this process, either in this review cycle or in future cycles. We look forward to fresh proposals and continued participation in these discussions as we move towards 2020. For example, we might consider whether subsidiary bodies, which initially aimed to foster richer dialogue, have become set-pieces where we rehash well-known positions. Perhaps the topics of each subsidiary body could be open to change to reflect current issues rather than those that were current in 2000.

In addition, the current structure is not well-suited to dealing with issues that cut across the three clusters or Main Committees – such as capacity building. We have learned the importance of having effective leaders in place early in the process. We have made a strong start in this cycle, and look forward to the early confirmation of the remaining leadership positions.

Building Consensus Around Common Interests

Mr. Chairman,
The culture of consensus building and consensus-based decision making have protected our individual interests and promoted our collective interests for nearly a half century. This culture of consensus should guide us over the next three years, as we look to a productive review in 2020, and into the next half century.

The need for consensus forces us to focus on our common interests—the security and development benefits we all gain from the Treaty, the collective threats we all face from challenges to the Treaty, and our shared obligation to build the capacity needed to support the Treaty and strengthen its implementation. While our positions on specific issues may clash, the need for consensus helps us to recall the fundamental harmonious interests that rest at the core of the Treaty and larger nonproliferation regime to which it is central.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, the United States looks forward to continuing the dialogue that we have begun here to recall our common interests, to build on areas of longstanding consensus, and to identify new areas where consensus should be possible.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.